(d) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) and (b) The Planning Commission has initiated action for setting up a High Level Group to look into the various factors influencing the performance of the service sector and suggest policy measures which would need to be taken to sustain its competitiveness in the coming years. The High Level Group will function under the overall Guidance of Planning Commission and will include experts from the relevant areas.

(c) and (d) The National Farmer's Commission under the Chairmanship of Dr. M.S. Swaminathan has already gone into the various issues related to the agricultural sector including its slow growth and has submitted its reports to the Government. The Planning Commission has also set up 12 Working Groups to make recommendations on various aspects of development of the agricultural and allied sectors in the Eleventh Plan. A Steering Group under the Chairmanship of Dr. OH. Hanumantha Rao would also, *inter alia,* go into the issue of slow agricultural growth. There is no proposal under consideration of Planning Commission at present for setting up yet another group to monitor the slow growth of the agricultural sector.

Investment in rural infrastructure

358. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any initiatives for the development of rural infrastructure by bringing huge investments in rural areas by 2010; and

(b) if so, the details thereof by indicating various schemes and policy made by the Planning Commission so far for the infrastructure development in rural areas by making it transparent and accountable in the country, particularly in Maharashtra State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government has launched Bharat Nirman programme as a four-year plan to build infrastructure in rural areas with identified physical

targets for completion by 2009. The estimate of total expenditure for the Bharat Nirman has been assessed as about Rs. 1,76,000 crore. Bharat Nirman has six components, namely, irrigation, roads, water supply, housing, rural electrification and rural telecom connectivity. In each of these areas targets to be achieved by 2009 are as below:

(i) To bring additional one crore hectares under assured irrigation.

(ii) To connect all villages that have a population of 1000 (or 500 in hilly/ tribal areas) with road.

(iii) To construct 60 lakhs additional houses for the poor.

(iv) To provide drinking water to the remaining 74000 habitations that are uncovered.

(v) To reach electricity to the remaining 1,25,000 villages and offer electricity connection to 2.3. crore households.

(vi) To give telephone connectivity to the remaining 66,822 villages.

The details of names of schemes under which the respective Ministries assist the States are as below. The schemes are formulated and got implemented through the States by the respective Ministries.

Rural infrastructure area	Name of scheme under which States are assisted and Ministry concerned
1. Irrigation	Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme Ministry of Water Resources
2. Roads	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana Ministry of Rural Development
3. Housing	Indira Awaas Yojana-Ministry of Rural Development
4. Drinking Water including water quality	Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme-Department of Drinking Water Supply, Ministry of Rural Development
5. Electrification	Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana-Ministry of Power
6. Telephone connectivity	Universal Service Obligation Fund-Ministry of Telecom munication

The entire Bharat Nirman Programme has been web enabled with details of the individual schemes, State-wise, including Maharashtra, with the physical and financial status being updated in the web site of Bharat Nirman. The Committee on Rural Infrastructure chaired by the Prime Minister (in which the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission is the Member—Convener) is monitoring Bharat Nirman programme.

Public transport to decongest cities

359. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the public transport is the only solution to decongest cities like Hyderabad;

(b) if so, the steps taken in this direction so far during the last three years;

(c) whether his Ministry is encouraging wide spectrum of other proven transport technologies successfully operating in other parts of the world;

(d) if so, the study done by Government in this regard; and

(e) the action plan prepared for each city so far, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI AJAYMAKEN): (a) Efficient, comfortable, reliable and affordable public transport and non-motorized modes are best solutions to decongest cities including Hyderabad.

(b) In order to ensure safe, affordable, quick, comfortable, reliable and sustainable access for the growing number of city residents to jobs, education, etc. within the cities, Government has approved National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP) in April, 2006. The Policy provides guidelines and incentives to the States/cities to design their urban transport strategies. The Government is providing Central financial assistance for urban transport projects through various schemes like Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), Scheme of Ministry of Finance for financial support to Public Private Partnership in Infrastructure and budgetary support, etc.

(c) As per NUTP 2006, the Government is encouraging all proven